TAKING A RIDE ON THE CLUB SIDE

BARS, BOOZE AND BRAWLS ARE ALL PART OF A NIGHT'S WORK FOR CITY COPS PAGE 4

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Monday, December 17, 2012

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THIS MUST END

U.S. President Barack Obama speaks at an interfaith vigil for the shooting victims from Sandy Hook Elementary School on Sunday in Newtown, Conn. In an impassioned speech, Obama noted this was the fourth time in his presidency he had to visit a community in the aftermath of a mass shooting. More coverage, pages 8 & 9. OLIVIER DOULIERY/POOL/GETTY IMAGES

Teachers' strike leaves parents in the lurch

Super Tuesday.
With schools due to close this week, the race is on to find child-care options

As he watches his daughter Sarah help give figure-skating lessons to younger kids, Tim MacFarlane smiles. Not everyone is as lucky as they are — some will need a helping hand.

It's as true for skating as it is for families struggling to cope with the one-day teacher strikes scheduled this week.

When public elementary schools close across much of the GTA in what is being called "Super Tuesday," Sarah has a grandmother to take care of her. But MacFarlane knows this isn't the case for families who will be scrambling to find accommodation for their kids.

"A lot of parents don't have money, can't pay for extra child care," said MacFarlane, who sits on the board of Superfriends daycare at Huron Street Public School. Like many daycare programs across the city, they're staying open all day to take the pressure off parents.

Elementary school teachers in Halton announced Sunday that they would strike Wednesday, turning Super Tuesday into a super week of rotating strikes across the province and leaving parents in the lurch.

Along with Halton, elementary teachers in Algoma, near Sault Ste Marie, and Bluewater, near Sarnia, announced Sunday they too would strike Wednesday.

Also protesting Tuesday are five other boards across Ontario: Greater Essex in the Windsor area, Lambton-Kent in Sarnia and Chatham, Waterloo, Grand Erie in Brantford, and Near North in North Bay.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

By the numbers

339,000

The number of students at 761 schools in the GTA who will be without classes Tuesday, according to the affected school boards.

Seahawks soar in T.O. rout

Seattle crushes the Buffalo Bills 50-17 in front of more than 40,000 fans wat Rogers Centre PAGE 27

Watts gets swept away

Actress recalls the visceral experience of bringing a tsunami survivor's story to the big screen PAGE 22

You want a perkier bum?

You may want to think twice about fixing your flat with a butt injection after reading one woman's cautionary tale PAGE 3

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New rail line

Metrolinx faces heat over 'clear-cutting'

It has been touted as a transformational rail expansion. But some Mount Dennis residents aren't happy so far about the impact of the new Union-to-Pearson rail line on their neighbourhood.

Those living beside or near the tracks say Metrolinx, the agency in charge of expanding the 20-kilometre Georgetown South train corridor, is "clear-cutting" — levelling all the trees and shrubs that have grown wild along the tracks for years.

For every larger tree being removed, however, three new trees will be planted somewhere else.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Potential downsides

Local firm warns city of casino perils

While U.S. casino giants eagerly woo Toronto, Bay Street buyout firm Onex Corp. is playing a different game.

Onex, with holdings including the Las Vegas Tropicana casino-hotel and four Alberta casinos, has hired former city councillor Kyle Rae and Dave McCleary of Strategy Corp. to lobby councillors. The Onex lobbyists are highlighting potential downsides and pouring cold water on predictions of a revenue and jobs bonanza in a city staff report. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Former city councillor Kyle Rae.
RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Take a trip that's Worlds Away

Erica Linz, lead actress, walks the red carpet with characters from Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away before an advance screening in Toronto on Sunday. The new 3-D adventure, directed by Andrew Adamson and produced by James Cameron, opens Friday.

TARA WALTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Butt-injection patient talks about procedure

Risky. Brampton woman says she was 'one of the lucky ones' in cosmetic procedure that's growing in the black market

It was the talk among her group of friends, a no-fuss procedure that would give her the curves she always wanted — the perfect, perky posterior.

For months, the 25-year-old Brampton woman said she shopped around for someone who could give her the body she wanted and, at one point, even bought a plane ticket to Colombia to get a buttocks-enhancement procedure done there.

But then she heard of an injection service in the GTA that, according to its website that has since been shut down, used a cosmetic filler called PMMA (polymethylmethacrylate) that would provide "more projection on the back end with no downtime."

The woman was sold.

On a Monday afternoon in April 2011, a female "injector" is said to have arrived at the woman's Brampton townhouse and, after pocketing $2,800 in cash, followed her to an upstairs bedroom and told her to stretch out on her stomach.

According to the woman, the injector then filled a syringe with a PMMA product — a thick, clear liquid — and drove the needle into her bare buttocks, warning her to stay on her stomach for at least 24 hours to let the substance settle.

More than a year later, the Brampton woman, who asked not to be named to avoid embarrassment over having tried the procedure, said her buttocks seem to have shrunk back to their pre-injection size and the only evidence of the $2,800 procedure, she said, is slight skin discolouration around the areas where she was injected.

Still, she said, she considers herself "one of the lucky ones."

Over the last decade, experts say North America's fast-growing cosmetic surgery industry has been accompanied by a swelling black market for beauty procedures, performed in hotels, beauty salons and private homes — both at bargain rates and great risk.

Since 2002, authorities across the United States have investigated more than a dozens deaths related to illegal buttocks injections, according to a report published in the Los Angeles Times last October. In one case, authorities in Florida arrested a woman who allegedly pumped her clients' bodies with a mixture of rubber cement, mineral oil and 'Fix-a-Flat' tire sealant.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local woman charged

Marilyn Ely Reid
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

- Last month, Toronto police charged Marilyn Ely Reid, a 46-year-old unlicenced injector from Newmarket, with criminal negligence causing bodily harm after one of her alleged clients became critically ill after receiving several injections last August. The unidentified Brampton woman, who saw a photo of Reid released by Toronto police, identified Reid as her injector.

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‘Witching hour’ in the club zone

Part 1. Metro reporter Jessica Smith rides along with 52 Division in the Entertainment District in this first of a two-part feature to get a handle on law enforcement’s perspective on alcohol and crime

JESSICA SMITH
jessica.smith@metronews.ca

The first drunk-tank admission begins in the alley outside of This is London Nightclub, where an already wasted 20-something is ejected from the line and starts screaming, “f_ _k f_ _k f_ _k you cop,” to a couple of bike patrol officers who’d come to help the door staff.

“He had a choice,” says 52 Division Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe.

Given the choice of arranging a safe way home with a relatively sober friend or continuing to scream at police, it’s remarkable how many people actually ask to be taken to the drunk-tank.

It changes the way you look at people, says Thorpe.

At the beginning of the night, the six-foot-five former University of Toronto football player had said — as he carefully folded himself into a police cruiser, making it look comically small by comparison — that after 25 years on the Toronto police force, he’s realized that what some people call his cynicism is just reality.

In the Entertainment District — Adelaide, Richmond and King Street West between University and Spadina — it’s a repetitive cycle of people getting drunk, getting violent and sometimes stabbing, shooting or “bottling” each other.

It’s also young, drunken people swearing at him and calling Thorpe a pig, and he and his officers quietly laughing and calling them names right back after they’re gone.

At about 1 a.m. someone is “bottled” at Tryst on Peter Street and the door staff warns police that they have a bad crowd.

Bottle service — spending about $100 on a bottle of booze at over a 100 per cent markup — doesn’t seem to make anyone sit and savour it. It goes down fast, leaving a bottle that could be used as a weapon on the table.

What could make the club district safer?

“I don’t know what’s going to stop a guy from just coming up and punching another guy in the head,” says Thorpe.

Cops on horseback try to control a crowd on King Street West early Sunday morning, asking everyone to disperse. Some leave, but others stay and gawk at the horses. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Quoted

“We’ve got fights and things happening all over the district right now.”

Police dispatcher, 52 Division

Outside of City Nightclub, a girl in a blue bandana is yelling at cops that a bouncer assaulted her, but they’d seen her slap a bouncer, not the other way around, so they just tell her to go home.

She’s drunk, crying and yelling at the officers, whom she inexplicably calls “feds,” to “serve and protect.”

Her friend is curled up in a ball, nearly comatose, on the curb in front of Thorpe’s cruiser, when a young male stranger takes her hand, eventually pulls her up to standing and starts to lead her away.

When she falls into traffic, her friend finally notices and shoos the guy away, still yelling at police.

Thorpe says the date rape drug is common. He’ll often see a man leading an oblivious woman away from a club and won’t know if he really is her boyfriend.

Over the radio there’s a call about Maison Nightclub, a swankier place on Mercer with a Ferrari parked out front that caters to a slightly older crowd and the occasional professional athlete. Two ambulances are needed. One reaction to drugs or alcohol and another for a victim hit over the head with a bottle.

After last call a fight breaks out on King near Spadina, people start trying to push the flaming gas-powered heat lamps over and cops on horseback try to clear gawking bystanders so the fight doesn’t escalate into a brawl.

The dispatcher says there is another fight going down.

En route, Thorpe’s car passes another smaller altercation.

“We don’t have enough resources,” he says.

At 2:52 a.m., over the radio an officer says, “We’ve got fights and things happening all over the district right now.”

It’s the “witching hour,” says Thorpe.

By 3:30 a.m., things have quieted down. Thorpe drives over to Crocodile Rock on Adelaide to check on a team of paramedics who picked up a girl who has passed out.

She lies on a gurney with an orange bag around her face to catch her vomit. Her distraught friend looks over her. “This is alcohol,” Thorpe says.

PART TWO OF FEATURE RUNS TUESDAY

Quoted

“I don’t know what’s going to stop a guy from just coming up and punching another guy in the head.”

Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe

Odds of being assaulted go up in club district: Cops

It’s D platoon’s shift, but members of Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe’s C platoon are working on their days off, paid by provincial TAVIS (Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy) money to keep things calm in the club district. Members of the major crime unit and plainclothes officers are out, too, some on foot, some on bikes and others on horses.

“If you want to avoid being assaulted, avoid the entertainment district,” says Thorpe. “Your odds of being assaulted go through the roof.”

That’s partly because of alcohol, but also because of the “anti-social types who come to fight” and the ever-present gang element, he says.

In front of City Nightclub, the cops’ prisoner van is rocking as a remarkably strong young woman has a fit inside. It took four officers to subdue her.

The officers say she was dressed like a boy, unlike the vast majority of woman in the district, who mostly wear mini-dresses and sky-high stilettos.

Thorpe says girls aren’t powerless victims in the club scene. They’ll be just as drunk and pugnacious as men.

It disturbs him that at the end of the night when their feet hurt from their shoes, the girls can be so drunk that they’ll stand barefoot in the ice waiting for a hotdog.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Gangs

Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe says the gang problem in the club scene isn’t limited to the clientele. He points to a few of the clubs and names the gangs who run them, disguising drug and illegal gambling money as alcohol sales. The money means the club district will never go away, he says.

Staff Sgt. Greg Thorpe in the Entertainment District on Saturday. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

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Poll

Half of residents say Gardiner not safe

Half of Toronto residents do not believe the Gardiner Expressway is safe to use, a new Forum Research poll finds. The poll of 897 adults, randomly selected, was conducted via interactive voice response on Friday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Expressway looking west from the Don River. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pets rescued

Dog honks car horn for help

London police say several neglected dogs and cats have been rescued after a 13-year-old Husky alerted authorities by honking the horn of a truck where he, and four other animals, had been held for several days.

Police were called after a muzzled husky was seen honking the horn of a delivery truck which had been sitting in a downtown parking lot for days. Inside the truck, police found two other dogs and two cats.

Donna Hebert and Allan Folkins-Wyre have been charged with five counts of animal cruelty each, and are also facing charges from the Ontario SPCA. THE CANADIAN PRESS/AM980

Highway 404

Head-on collision kills two men

Two men are dead following a head-on collision involving a vehicle travelling the wrong way on Highway 404, north of Toronto.

Ontario Provincial Police Sgt. David Woodford says a Dodge Neon was travelling southbound in the northbound lanes near Aurora Road when it collided with a Honda Accord just before 6 a.m. Saturday.

Woodford says the force of the impact sent scattered debris all over the highway.

Both the drivers died on the scene.

The victims have not been identified.

Highway 404 was closed for several hours at Aurora Road. THE CANADIAN PRESS/CFRB

Odd partnership turns 'Crack Tower' around

Landlord's buildings were some of city's worst. Now, they've got nearly $5 million in funding to serve as affordable housing

Once one of the city's worst addresses, a Landsdowne highrise is both affordable and livable again, thanks to a city-administered program

It's an unlikely mix: the city, a handful of health and social agencies, a landlord long hounded by officials for infractions in his rundown highrises.

Now, they're all under the same roof at one of Toronto's more infamous addresses, housing some of the city's most vulnerable.

Vincenzo Barrasso's 23-storey apartment building at 1011 Lansdowne Ave., near Dupont Street, was known as Crack Tower in the late-1990s and early-2000s. Empty units with missing doors served as headquarters for drug dealers and squatters. Prostitutes roamed the hallways. Residents bragged they'd lived there for years without paying rent.

"Ugh," is the first thing area councillor Ana Bailao says when describing it. "It was a huge, huge problem."

Last year, Barrasso's five Toronto highrises got nearly $5 million in federal funds for renovations under the city-administered Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). Nearly $1.3 million of that went to Lansdowne. In return, rents can't exceed the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's market average for Toronto for 10 years.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the University Health Network have clients living there, partnered with social agencies to provide round-the-clock supportive care.

It's a far cry from the heated court battles the city was waging with Barrasso less than a decade ago.

"It's a partnership of odd bedfellows that's turned out well," says Susan Pigott, vice-president of communications and community engagement at CAMH.

In 2010, property manager Roslyn Brown secured funding for the Lansdowne tower through the RRAP program, administered by the city's affordable housing office. The following year, additional RRAP money went to Lansdowne and Barrasso's other properties, comprising almost half the cash distributed in 2011.

"It's a win-win situation," says Brown. "It's a win for the people who own the building, it's a win for the tenants." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"Maybe at the time people can say I'm a bad person. I'm not a bad person. I had a lot of bad news.... I lost control."

Vincenzo Barrasso, building owner

Property manager Roslyn Brown spent years evicting drug dealers and renovating the highrise at 1011 Lansdowne Ave., formerly known as Crack Tower, before securing RRAP funds. JESSICA MCDIARMID/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Memory lapse. Police ready to ID mystery amnesiac

The mystery surrounding Linda, the woman with no memory, appears to be over.

Toronto police are expected to reveal her identity Monday morning, and all signs point to Linda being an American from Delaware named Linda Hegg. The announcement will end a more than three-month search that baffled police.

Police will reveal the results of DNA tests done to determine whether Linda is in fact Hegg, 55, from Newark, Del. Hegg's family in the U.S. is anxiously awaiting the announcement.

"It will be nice to know where my daughter is," said Hegg's father, 83-year-old Tom Hegg. "What I can't understand is why she went to Canada. She never talked about Canada."

The mystery began in early September, when a neatly dressed woman walked into a crowded shelter for the homeless in downtown Toronto. All she had with her was a tote bag filled with scraps of paper, a bottle of water, a map of Toronto bus routes and a wallet with a $20 Canadian bill. She had no ID. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Vatican

Pope offers his prayers to families

Pope Benedict XVI told pilgrims and tourists in St. Peter's Square on Sunday that he is praying for the families of the 20 children and six adults who were killed during a shooting rampage at a U.S. school.

Benedict said he was "deeply saddened by Friday's senseless violence ..."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Missing women inquiry

Oppal to release Pickton report

The closest thing Marilyn Renter has ever had to a trial for her step-daughter's death is the inquiry into the failures that allowed Robert Pickton to target sex workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

On Monday, Renter will find out whether her long wait for justice has been answered as Commissioner Wally Oppal releases a report outlining why Pickton wasn't caught sooner and what should be done to prevent similar failures in the future.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Possible contamination

Frozen burger recall expanded

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is expanding a nationwide recall of frozen beef burgers that may be contaminated with E. coli bacteria. The public is now warned not to consume Cardinal Select brand Prime Rib Beef Burgers sold in 1.13 kilogram packages with a best before date of July 31, 2013.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Student safety

School board reassures parents

A Halifax school board is reaching out to parents in the wake of the shooting in Newtown, Conn. "We want to reassure parents that we do have safety procedures in place," Doug Hadley, spokesperson for the school board, said on Sunday.

"The tragedy that happened in Connecticut is an unfortunate reminder that we'll have to be vigilant, and we have to do everything we can to ensure our students are safe."

HALEY RYAN/METRO IN HALIFAX

Victim of school massacre mourned in Winnipeg

Close to home.
Community offers their love and support to family of Connecticut shooting victim

ELISHA DACEY
Metro in Winnipeg

Ana Marquez-Greene, right, poses with her family. The six-year-old, who briefly attended elementary school in Winnipeg, was shot and killed Friday when a shooter opened fire at her school in Newtown, Conn. FACEBOOK

Members of a Winnipeg church and school are mourning a six-year-old girl, described as bright and talented, who died in a horrific school shooting in the U.S. on Friday.

Ana Marquez-Greene was one of the 20 children murdered in Newtown, Conn., in a rampage that left 28 dead, including the shooter and his mother. Ana, who moved back to Connecticut with her family after a few years in Winnipeg, was the daughter of University of Manitoba professor Jimmy Greene, an accomplished saxophone player.

Greene issued a statement via his Facebook page this weekend.

"Thank you for all of your prayers and kind words of support," reads the posting that was put up Saturday. "As we work through this nightmare, we're reminded how much we're loved and supported on this earth and by our Father in heaven. As much as she's needed here and missed by her mother, brother and me, Ana beat us all to paradise. I love you sweetie girl."

Ana attended Linden Christian School while she lived in Winnipeg with her parents and her brother, Isaiah. Isaiah was also at the school during the shooting but escaped unharmed.

"As a community, let's uphold James, Nelba and their son Isaiah, as well as the many individuals impacted by this tragedy, in prayer," said Linden Christian principal Rob Charach.

The family attended Whyte Ridge Baptist Community Church while in Canada, and the church had a vigil Friday night. Pastor Terry Janke said about 60 families showed.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

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School massacre. Leftover ammo suggests an even deadlier plan: Police

The gunman in the Connecticut shooting rampage was carrying an arsenal of hundreds of rounds of especially deadly ammunition — enough to kill just about every student in the school if given enough time, authorities said Sunday, raising the chilling possibility that the bloodbath could have been far worse.

Adam Lanza shot himself in the head just as he heard police drawing near to the classroom where he was slaughtering helpless children, but he had more ammunition at the ready in the form of multiple high-capacity clips, each capable of holding 30 bullets.

The disclosure on Sunday sent shudders throughout this picturesque community in the northeastern U.S., as grieving families sought to comfort each other during church services devoted to impossible questions, like that of a six-year-old girl who asked her mother: "The little children, are they with the angels?"

With so much grieving left to do, many of Newtown's 27,000 people wondered whether life could ever return to normal. And as the work week was set to begin, parents weighed whether to send their own children back to school.

Adam Lanza posing for a photo that appeared in the Newtown High School yearbook. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amid the confusion and sorrow, stories of heroism emerged, including an account of the principal, Dawn Hochsprung, 47, and the school psychologist, Mary Sherlach, 56, rushing toward Lanza in an attempt to stop him. Both died.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No one harmed

Churchgoers flee after phone threat

Worshippers quickly left St. Rose of Lima Church Sunday when someone phoned in a threat.

The threat interrupted a crowded mass and touched off a large police response days after the worst massacre of school-age children in U.S. history.

Gunman Adam Lanza, his mother and eight of the child victims attended St. Rose of Lima.

The church hosted overflow crowds at all three morning masses Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More online

Read and see more about the Newton, Conn., school shooting at metronews.ca, including:

- Portraits of shooting victims show lives at their very start, which ended in a hail of gunfire
- Gunman's father speaks of sympathy and heartbreak
- Many employees at the Connecticut school are being hailed as heroes in the wake of deadly shooting

U.S. is failing to keep kids safe, Obama says

Grieving families. Trip to Connecticut is the president's fourth visit to a mourning city in the aftermath of a mass shooting

Residents hold a candlelight vigil outside Newtown High School after President Barack Obama delivered remarks at an interfaith vigil for the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on Sunday at Newtown High School in Newtown, Conn. A gunman walked into the elementary school Friday and opened fire. EVAN VUCCI/AP PHOTO

For U.S. President Barack Obama, it was another sorrowful visit to another grieving community full of broken hearts from unimaginable violence.

The spot this time was Newtown, Conn., where on Friday a man opened fire inside Sandy Hook Elementary School. The toll: 26 dead, including 20 boys and girls just six or seven years old.

A mournful Obama said Sunday that the nation is failing to keep its children safe, pledging that change must come after an elementary-school massacre left 20 children dead.

"What choice do we have?" Obama said. "Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard?"

In an interfaith vigil for the fallen at Newtown High School, in a moment of grief that spread around the world, Obama conceded that none of his words would match the sorrow. But he declared to the community of Newtown: "You are not alone."

The president planned a private meeting Sunday afternoon with families of the victims and with emergency personnel who responded to the shootings.

The massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary on Friday elicited horror around the world, soul-searching in the United States, fresh political debate about gun control and questions about the incomprehensible — what drove the suspect to act.

Just last summer, Obama went to Aurora, Colo., to visit victims and families after a shooting spree at a movie theatre in the Denver suburb left 12 dead. He went to Tucson, Ariz., in January of last year after six people were killed and 13 were wounded, including then-Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, outside a grocery store.

Privately, Obama told Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy that Friday was the most difficult day of his presidency.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Preventative measures

Democrats call for gun restrictions

Democratic lawmakers said Sunday that military-style assault weapons should be banned and that a national commission should be established to examine mass shootings in the U.S.

The proposals were among the first to come from Congress in the wake of Friday's massacre in Newtown, Conn. Gun rights activists remained largely quiet on the issue, all but one declining to appear on the Sunday talk shows. Meanwhile, Democrats vowed action and said it was time to hear from voters — not gun lobbyists — on how to prevent the next shooting.

The president and Senate Democrats haven't pushed for new gun control measures since taking power in 2008. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Groups call for another vote in Egypt's referendum

Alleged violations. Ruling party accused of tampering with polling stations

Egyptian rights groups on Sunday called for a repeat of the first round of the constitutional referendum, alleging the vote was marred by widespread violations. Islamists who back the disputed charter claimed they were in the lead with a majority of "yes" votes, though official results have not been announced.

Representatives of seven rights groups charged that there was insufficient supervision by judges in Saturday's vote in 10 of Egypt's 27 provinces, and independent monitors were prevented from witnessing vote counts.

The representatives told a news conference that they had reports of individuals falsely identifying themselves as judges, of women prevented from voting and that members of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood were allowed inside polling stations. They also complained that some polling centres closed earlier than scheduled and that Christians were denied entry to polling stations.

The vote is the latest stage in a near two-year struggle over Egypt's identity since the ouster of longtime leader Hosni Mubarak in a popular uprising. The latest crisis over the Islamist-backed charter evolved into a fight — deadly at times — over whether Egypt should move toward a religious state under Morsi's Brotherhood and their ultraconservative Salafi allies, or one that retains secular traditions and an Islamic character. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Security

120,000

The number of army troops that were deployed to help police protect polling stations and state institutions.

A man walks near barbed wire set up by protesters in Tahrir Square on Sunday. Key Egyptian rights groups called for another vote of the first round of the constitutional referendum. AMR NABIL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Japan

Right-wing party wins election in landslide vote

Japan's conservative Liberal Democratic Party returned to power in a landslide election victory Sunday after three years in opposition, according to early returns, signalling a rightward shift in the government that could further heighten tensions with China, a key economic partner as well as rival. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

United States

Clinton suffers a concussion

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sustained a concussion last week after becoming extremely dehydrated and fainting while suffering from a stomach virus, the State Department said.

The doctors did not determine it to be a "severe" concussion, the official said. Clinton, 65, is recovering at home. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Ontario man's been ready for impending disaster for half a century

Bruce Beach shows off the living quarters in his underground bunker in Horning's Mills, Ont. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bunker. Whether for the Cuban missile crisis, Y2K or a nuclear catastrophe Bruce Beach has been ready

Don't talk to Bruce Beach about doomsday. He's been preparing for impending disaster for a half-century and has seen apocalyptic agitation come and go, like so many fads.

So forgive him for not panicking over the end of the Mayan calendar on Dec. 21, this coming Friday.

The 78-year-old former high school teacher, who has a huge nuclear bunker, built his first shelter for the Cuban missile crisis in the 1960s.

He was prepared to go underground for the Y2K crisis, amid widespread concern that computer glitches might bring down airplanes in 2000. He received lots of calls from people seeking shelter during the 1982 Falklands War.

But his busiest day was Sept. 11, 2001, when his website was bombarded with 85,000 hits within three hours.

People regularly drop in to seek refuge in the shelter he built in the 1980s, named the Ark Two, which is comprised of 42 buried school buses.

The labyrinth, with its kitchens, showers and separate bunk rooms for children and adults, is about 90 kilometres northwest of Toronto, in Horning's Mills.

"People have been in a panic because someone has prophesized the end of the world this particular week or whatever," Beach said.

"They call us up just to make sure we have space in the shelter and I tell them, 'For sure.'" Beach's main concern has always been the threat of nuclear attacks, which he fears are even closer than ever because of Middle East conflicts or Iran.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BBC Sports awards. Kate attends first function since hospitalization

The pregnant Duchess of Cambridge made her first public appearance Sunday night since her hospitalization for acute morning sickness.

The former Kate Middleton presented awards at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year prizes, which were broadcast throughout Britain.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Duchess of Cambridge on Sunday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ikea monkey. Darwin's owner files lawsuit for return of her pet

The owner of Darwin, the monkey in a faux shearling coat who almost wandered into a north Toronto Ikea store, has filed a lawsuit to get her pet back.

Toronto Animal Services captured Darwin last Sunday and transferred him to a primate sanctuary in Sunderland. Yasmin Nakhuda's lawsuit names the sanctuary and alleges they have "unlawfully detained" the monkey.

The suit also claims that officials only had the right to issue a ticket, not to seize the animal. "The bylaw does not have any provisions that allow the officer to withhold returning the pet to the owner," said Nakhuda's lawyer, Theodore Charney.

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Earlier homebound on some GO Train trips, and minor adjustments to some GO Bus routes, on all corridors.

December 25
Sunday schedule

December 26
Saturday schedule

December 28
Earlier homebound on some GO Train trips on the Richmond Hill and Stouffville lines. Plus, minor adjustments to GO Bus routes 61 & 71.

December 31
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40	$13	$11	$16	$13	$24	$19	$41	$29
45	$16	$13	$23	$17	$33	$22	$57	$38
50	$17	$13	$33	$24	$52	$36	$96	$67
55	$25	$19	$53	$37	$89	$66	$168	$123
60	$37	$26	$80	$59	$100	$110	$310	$212
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70	$102	$70	$248	$167	$492	$328	$971	$652

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Alternate path for authors

Going it alone. Here are five tips to help you get in on the ebook explosion in 2013

In 2012, Douglas & McIntyre filed for bankruptcy protection, Random House of Canada become the sole owner of McClelland & Stewart, and Penguin and Random House planned to merge.

It's perhaps no surprise that year also saw an explosion in online self-publishing, with a wealth of platforms — including Kobo Writing Life, Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing and iBooks Author — offering authors an alternate avenue.

"We're actually hearing from a lot of different types of authors, some brand new and some successful ... that have had traditional contracts that are just using self-publishing to experiment with new stuff or put books out that they wanted to do on a different cycle than their traditional publishers were," says Libby Johnson McKee, director of Kindle Direct Publishing.

If you have dreams of being a self-publishing sensation in 2013, here are tips on how to stand out in an increasingly crowded market:

EReaders, from left, a Kobo Touch, an Amazon Kindle, an Aluratek Libre Air and a Barnes & Noble Nook. Platforms that offer authors an alternate way to get published — including Kobo Writing Life, Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing and iBooks Author — have led to a boom in self-publishing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

1 **The moment you start writing the book, begin building your marketing platform.**

"The hardest thing about self-publishing is marketing, not writing, and people find this out too late," says author Guy Kawasaki, who has self-published two books and explains how to do so in the newly released APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur — How to Publish Your Book.

He recommends spending two to three hours a day on writing, and one hour a day building a marketing platform on social media sites such as Google Plus, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

2 **It sounds simple but — write a great book (and know your audience).**

"Bad books just don't sell," says Johnson McKee. "And if you write a great book and really work hard on getting your message right, the craft of writing is still the thing that wins the day."

Browse blogs of authors in the same genre and understand what fans like to read.

3 **Once the book is written, start crowdsourcing. Get fans, friends, colleagues and others to copy edit and/or review the book.**

"Do this immediately before it goes on sale, so that as soon as it goes on sale you have a bunch of great reviews for the book," says Kawasaki (he sent APE in full format to about 1,000 people before he self-published it, and just three days after it went on sale it had about 135 online reviews).

4 **Lure in readers by putting your work on various sites and devices. And create catchy metadata, which includes the cover, title, description, biography, and price.**

"People judge a book by its cover, they do, so I would strongly recommend that authors consider using a professional cover designer and investing the time and effort in that," says Mark Lefebvre, director of self-publishing and author relations at Kobo. As with an ebook's text, the cover can also be changed once it's out in digital format.

5 **Write another great book as soon as possible.** Lefebvre notes that passionate and dedicated readers will whip through a book and immediately check to see if authors have written anything else.

This rule is particularly important for genre writers, adds Johnson McKee. "Those types of readers are voracious," she says. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Each insurance company views drivers differently. For drivers with tickets or accidents on their record, the biggest benefit of shopping around is to see which companies may rate that ticket or accident less harshly than others. Each insurance company determines how to rate for different types of tickets or accidents, which means that a better rate may be available somewhere else. In fact, rates can be vastly different for the same driver with the same ticket with two different companies.

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‘White tide’ flows through Madrid

A man holds a dummy depicting a health worker during a march Sunday by several thousand Spanish public health workers in Madrid to protest cuts to health care and privatization of medical centres and hospitals. The marches, described as a “white tide” because of the colour of the medical scrubs many were wearing, originated from four main hospitals in Madrid to converge on a main square in the capital. Doctors have already staged 16 days of strikes and health workers’ unions are calling for a third 48-hour strike on Dec. 19 and 20. Around 4,000 operations have been suspended in Madrid since the medical strikes started.

PABLO BLAZQUEZ DOMINGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

Ottawa. Can Tory-style lingo change NDP’s fiscal reputation?

Tom Mulcair boasts that he often sounds more like a conservative than Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

It may seem an odd thing for the leader of a social democratic party to brag about. But for the federal NDP leader, it’s part of his mission to prove to Canadians that New Democrats aren’t the wild-eyed, reckless taxers and spenders of lore.

Indeed, he maintains that’s a more apt description of Harper’s Conservatives, whom he accuses of racking up a huge environmental, economic and social debt that future generations will have to pay off.

“What’s a paradox ... is that these are essentially conservative themes that I’m evoking in the sense that it would be very conservative to say, ‘Don’t look for a handout, be self-reliant, pull yourself up by your bootstraps,’ all that sort of stuff,” Mulcair said in a year-end interview with The Canadian Press.

“But what the Conservatives are doing is living off the credit card of our grandchildren ... and I think that’s wrong.”

Mulcair still emphasizes traditional NDP issues: sustainable development and the need to reduce social inequalities. But he’s framing them in conservative language, essentially arguing that intergenerational equity requires the current generation to carry its own weight.

Mulcair’s terminology reflects a frank political calculation that the NDP must overcome lingering doubts about their economic management skills if they hope to form a government.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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FOR COUNCIL, INCREASING ARTS FUNDING SHOULD BE OBVIOUS

URBAN COMPASS
Matt Elliott
toronto@metronews.ca

Toronto city hall is set to make a bunch of tough decisions as they dig into their 2013 budget, but there's one part of the budget that shouldn't require much debate. After more than a decade of stalled promises, increasing the city's investment in arts and culture should be a total no-brainer.

The case for more arts funding is clear. Since 2003, when councillors first realized how far the municipality lagged behind other major cities in cultural investment, city hall has made at least three commitments to increasing their contribution to a more respectable level.

In 2003, that "respectable level" was set at $25 per capita. At the time, Toronto was contributing only $14-per-person to the arts. The target was picked because it matched the funding levels that Montreal was directing toward its arts-and-culture sector.

But we've done a lousy job at catching up to our civic rival. Toronto's per capita investment in the arts has increased only marginally, to about $18. Montreal, on the other hand, now contributes more than $50.

This isn't about governments doling out free handouts to beret-wearing poets. This is about contributing to the vibrancy of one of this city's most important economic sectors. The most recent report urging more arts funding to come before council, signed off on by former Conservative MP Jim Prentice and assorted Bay Street types, put a spotlight on the direct economic benefits of municipal cultural funding. It also won unanimous approval — even earning a vote from Mayor Rob Ford.

That report, and others since, highlighted that every dollar of city investment generates a massive return through matching funds and economic activity — some 2.9 million overnight visitors come to Toronto to participate in cultural events each year. Analysts also point out that there are currently more than 83,000 cultural workers in Toronto today, and that pushing investment to meet the city's target would create at least 1,000 new jobs.

And the kicker? There's already a revenue plan in place to help Toronto finally work toward its funding goal. After a long political slog and a pesky legal challenge, the city will finally see revenues from its new tax on billboards starting next year. Expected to bring in $10.5 million per year, directing those proceeds to the arts wouldn't get the city all the way to the $25-per-capita level, but it would sure get us closer.

But even with a strong economic argument and money readily available, some members of council expressed reluctance to pull the trigger on increased arts funding during budget deliberations. They should know better. What city council has before it is an artful solution to a long-standing problem. There's no more reason for delay.

Sampradaya Dance Creations perform the world premiere of Bridges as part of the triple bill Alchemy at Harbourfront Centre's Enwave Theatre in this November file photo. DAVID HOU/ALCHEMY/CONTRIBUTED

How much is the doggie made of chains?

NIRIT LEVAV PACKER/REX FEATURES

Recycled animal art

Bicycle chains get upcycled into art

An artist has created a series of incredibly detailed life-size dog sculptures made entirely from bicycle parts.

Israeli-born Nirit Levav Packer's collection includes a full-size greyhound, cocker spaniels and other mutts constructed from recycled bike chains, gears, pedals and even bike seats.

METRO

Element of surprise

Metal mutts are not as tough as they look

At the beginning, Packer was pleasantly surprised that her creations weren't as fierce and hard as the chains of metal imply.

"The first dog I made was a Rottweiler, thinking that the rough edges of the broken metal pieces would loan to the dog's tough persona," she said. "But instead I was surprised to have created a sculpture that was more friendly and cute than intimidating." METRO

Emotional representation

Innermost thoughts shown through dog

In describing her artwork, Packer defines it as, "excitement, curiosity and fun."

"For me, this art is a reflection of my own emotions," Packer said.

"It's a representation of my thoughts from inside out. I love to weld metal, and these chains are not heavy; (they're) surprisingly soft and flexible. Out of all the materials I use — keys, nails, watches — metal is my favourite." METRO

Artist's viewpoint

"The biggest challenge for me in this art is to capture the expressions that a real dog would typically make. Thankfully, this type of metal is very flexible."

Nirit Levav Packer, 49, of Tel Aviv

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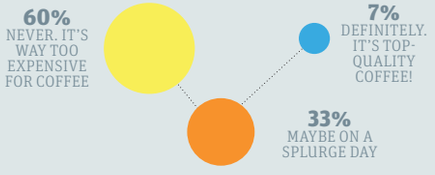

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Leslie Mann stars in This is 40, a movie directed by her husband, Judd Apatow. HANDOUT

Keeping it all in the family

This is 40. Leslie Mann talks about working with her children on movies directed by her husband and what middle age is like

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

Leslie Mann has made quite the career in husband Judd Apatow's movies, playing characters not too different from herself in Knocked Up, Funny People and now This is 40. In fact, much of the squabbling between Mann's Debbie and Paul Rudd's Pete in This is 40 was cultivated at home, making the film a kind of marriage counselling for the parents of two.

"It's like what I would fantasize about saying to Judd," Mann explains. "Like Debbie can say these things to Pete, but Leslie can't really say these things to Judd. It's fun to have this character to live through."

The film also gives Mann another chance to act alongside daughters Maude and Iris. (Like in Knocked Up, Mann and Apatow's real-life daughters co-star as Mann's character's kids.) But there can be trouble when her older daughter tries to take her work home with her, Mann admits.

"It's fun for Maude because we don't allow her to curse at home. I know she does at school," she says. "So it was fun for her to be able to do that at work, which I didn't think was a great idea, but Judd thinks is funny. So that's fun for her. But then she gets home from work and she tries to say the F-word or whatever and we have to shut her down."

Even with Apatow's brand of bold, uncomfortable comedy, Mann says she's game for anything. Of course, she had to draw the line somewhere, but that point has nothing to do with humorous or embarrassing situations.

"The only thing that made me feel uncomfortable in this movie is a scene with Iris when I'm laying in bed with her because it felt a little invasive," Mann admits. "I don't know why, because I can do anything else, but that for some reason felt a little like it was crossing some boundary. Just because everyone was sitting there watching me with my little girl doing what I do with my little girl, and I didn't like that."

As for life after 40, the actress — who hit the milestone herself last March — has found it to be a mixed bag.

"I think every day is different. Some days I feel fine and other days I feel like crying all day," she says. "I have lunches with my girlfriends who just turned 40, and some of those lunches we're crying and screaming about our husbands and saying we want to leave them and run away, and then other lunches we're fine and love our husbands and are happy with our lives."

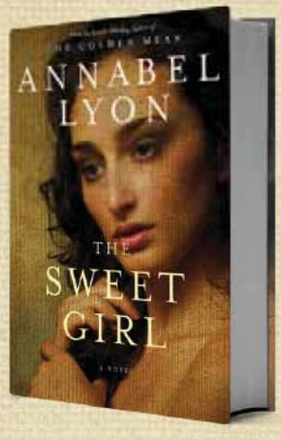
One thing is for sure, though: A sequel about turning 50 would likely be darker.

"I keep asking women who are a little bit older when is this going to pass, and they're like, 'It doesn't pass. It just gets worse,'" Mann says.

A little on Brooks

Albert Brooks on being a parent in Hollywood

- **Dad.** Albert Brooks, who plays Paul Rudd's leech of a dad in This is 40, knows that it can be uniquely difficult to be a parent in Hollywood — especially around awards season. "I've got kids who are 14 and 12, and you try to keep them from going to the actual movies when they go to the movie theatre, but then you let them watch screeners. So we all gathered around and watched Flight, and it prompted a discussion of cocaine that I never wanted to have."



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Schoenaerts aiming to avoid the U.S. typecast trap

Rust and Bone. Actor willing to turn down work if it means not getting stuck in the villain role

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

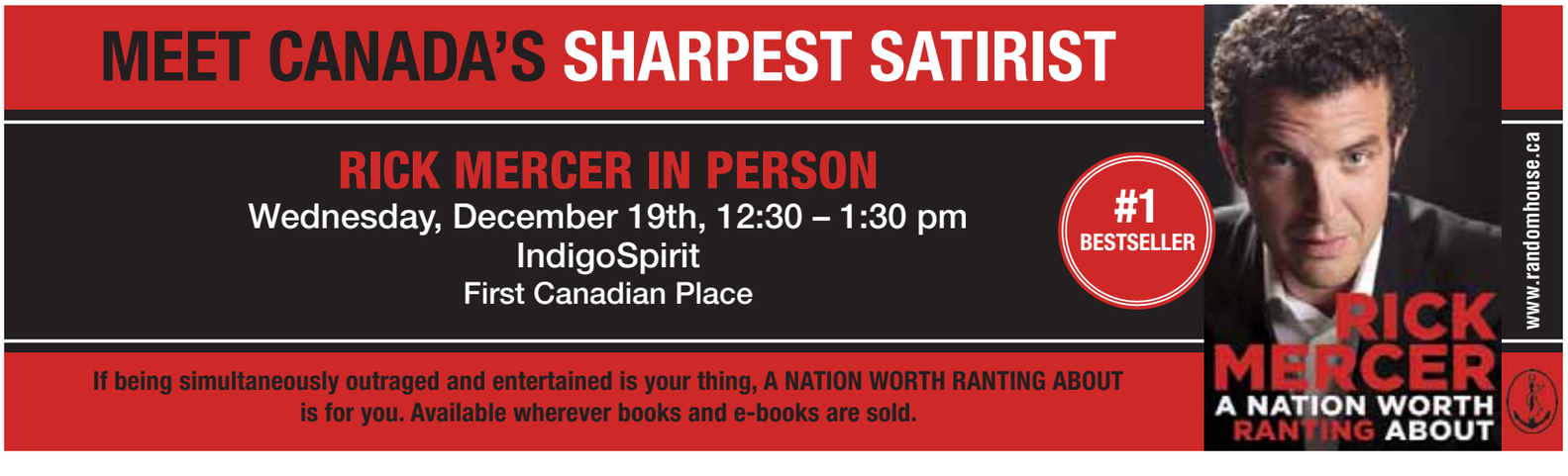
Matthias Schoenaerts is getting lots of good press for his latest role.
HANDOUT

Belgian actor Matthias Schoenaerts is making waves in Hollywood with Rust and Bone, Jacques Audiard's impressive drama that took Cannes and Toronto by storm. Schoenaerts stars opposite Marion Cotillard as a down-on-his-luck bouncer, single father and amateur boxer trying to make due in the south of France. But as he starts garnering attention in America, Schoenaerts is willing to be patient — and maybe turn down a few things — if it means avoiding the trap of being typecast as a bad guy.

You're playing a very frustrated guy here, a guy who sometimes can only communicate by punching things.
Yeah (laughs). That's part of who he is. To me, the challenge was to make him very simple and sincere and straightforward and honest and pure. So not to make him malicious in any way or make it a guy who edits himself or calculates his moves.

Are you at all worried about getting typecast as a villain? Because that's been known to happen to European actors in America.
Yeah, it's an accent thing, I guess. A lot of European actors, if they have that they make them be a Russian guy or a German guy or, I don't, a whatever guy. No, no, of course. It's something that you have to watch out for. I think it's also about daring to be patient.

Speaking of American films, up next, you have Blood Ties.
It's just a bunch of amazing actors. I'm a supporting character. By the beginning of the film, he gets sent to jail and loses his family because of that, because his wife can't take it anymore and says, "I'm leaving you" and she's taking her kid with her. And once my character gets out of jail, the only thing he wants is his family back, but that's where things get complicated (laughs).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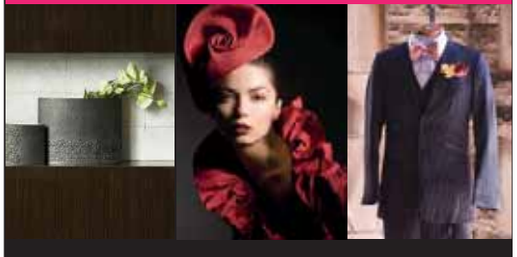

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Naomi Watts stars in The Impossible, a film about the 2004 South Pacific tsunami. JOSE HARO/SUMMIT ENTERTAINMENT

Putting The Impossible into proper perspective

Naomi Watts. Her latest film on the 2004 South Pacific tsunami left the actress waterlogged and deeply impressed

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News

Naomi Watts has spent a lot of time getting to know Maria Belon, and her esteem for the Spanish woman has in no way diminished. Belon and her family survived the 2004 South Pacific tsunami and went on to inspire Watts' new film, The Impossible. (The family has been recast as British for the movie.)

"I was blown away by her," Watts remembers. "Having gone through this experience together and knowing what she went through, you want to hold onto everything she feels and says because you know how close she came. There's something now about her that makes her just understand life better and it's just deeply impressive. I'm full of self-doubt and second-guessing and cynicism. That's another type of human being."

Self-doubt aside, Watts could at least relate to Belon as one mother to another.

"I'm not thinking about a tsunami on a daily basis," Watts admits. "I have fears about getting separated from my children just on the subway, you know? You laugh, but I've gone through in my head, 'What would I do?' It's happened on an elevator before. And then you're like, is your child going to know where to get off? Luckily it's only ever happened in our building, so it's OK. They know the number five. But if it's the subway and you haven't had a conversation about it ... You know, I've actually tried to have the conversation, but it's just too confusing for them."

Filming the harrowing and hazardous scenes taking place in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami was no picnic for the actress, but she's not one to complain, always remembering to keep things in perspective. Watts remembers one particular scene where she clings to a tree as water rushes past.

"I was there for a long time, but I was anchored with a harness. Still, with the pressure of the water coming, you still had to hang on tight," she says. "But you just kept reminding yourself, I'm not going to complain. I'm an actor recreating this. There were people who hung onto trees for 10, 12 hours."

Still, that doesn't mean the waterlogged sequence was a walk in the park.

"Physically, it's the most demanding thing I've ever done. Working with water is always going to be tough. I mean, it was five or six weeks in those tanks," she says.

But Tom Holland, who plays her eldest son in the film, seemed to enjoy himself, at least.

"Tom thought it was the most fun he's ever had," Watts says.

"It was like the water park every day, but the scariest possible one. But he's not only a trained athlete but he's 14, and I'm neither of those things."

Taking on the critics

Maria Belon is sick of the critics.

- **Quote.** The filmmakers behind The Impossible have come under fire for telling the story of the 2004 tsunami through the eyes of European tourists. But Maria Belon, the Spanish woman upon whom the story is based, has had enough. "I am fed up with the criticisms of it being in English, a British family," Belon says. "I can't understand why people don't understand what the movie is about."

Russell Crowe ALL IMAGES GETTY

Crowe vows to 'bring family back together'

Russell Crowe is taking Page Six to task over reports that he's dating Katie Lee, ex-wife of Billy Joel, while he's separated from his own wife, Danielle Spencer.

"These latest reports are false and cruel," Crowe — who is currently filming A Winter's Tale in NYC and promoting Les Miserables — posted to Twitter.

"As soon as I finish this job and can get home, my priority is to try to bring my family back together."

Hugh Grant

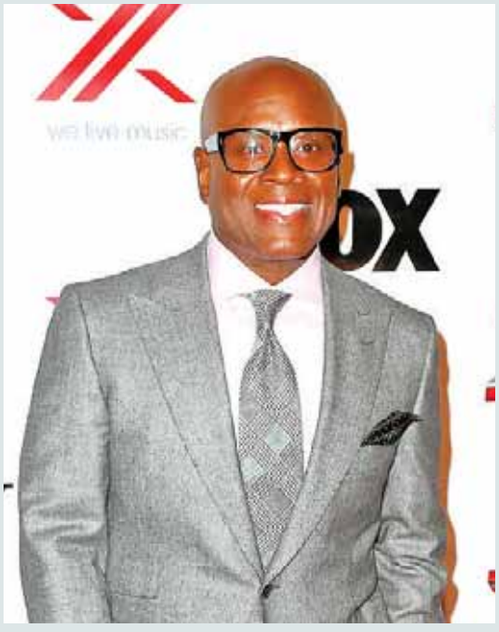
Jon Stewart dubs Grant worst Daily Show guest

Jon Stewart recently revealed that Hugh Grant was the worst guest he'd ever had on The Daily Show and he would "never" be invited back, saying at the Montclair Film Festival last week that Grant was "giving everyone s— the whole time. He's a big pain in the ass." Well, Grant got the message, posting to Twitter, "Turns out my inner crab got the better of me with TV producer in '09. Unforgivable. J. Stewart correct to give me kicking."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word



L.A. Reid will not be back for X Factor's third season

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Considering Demi Lovato and Simon Cowell's contentious behaviour and crazy-side-eyes on this season of The X Factor, it comes as some surprise that it's L.A. Reid who is the first casualty on the judge's panel. The stylishly-dressed music executive will not be coming back next season for the reality TV show.

"I have the utmost respect for Simon Cowell," Reid said Thursday in a statement. Reid claims he is going back to his job of running the Epic music label. "He is the very best, and I have had the opportunity to learn so much from him. Working with him on X Factor has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I'm honoured to have sat on the panel with such incredible talent. Of course, I will miss the show," Reid added. "In my opinion, Simon attracts the best talent, but I'm looking forward to getting back to my core business and the responsibility of running Epic Records."

Season 3 already has the go-ahead by Fox, but there's still no word on if Cowell's co-judges — Demi Lovato and Britney Spears — will be back.

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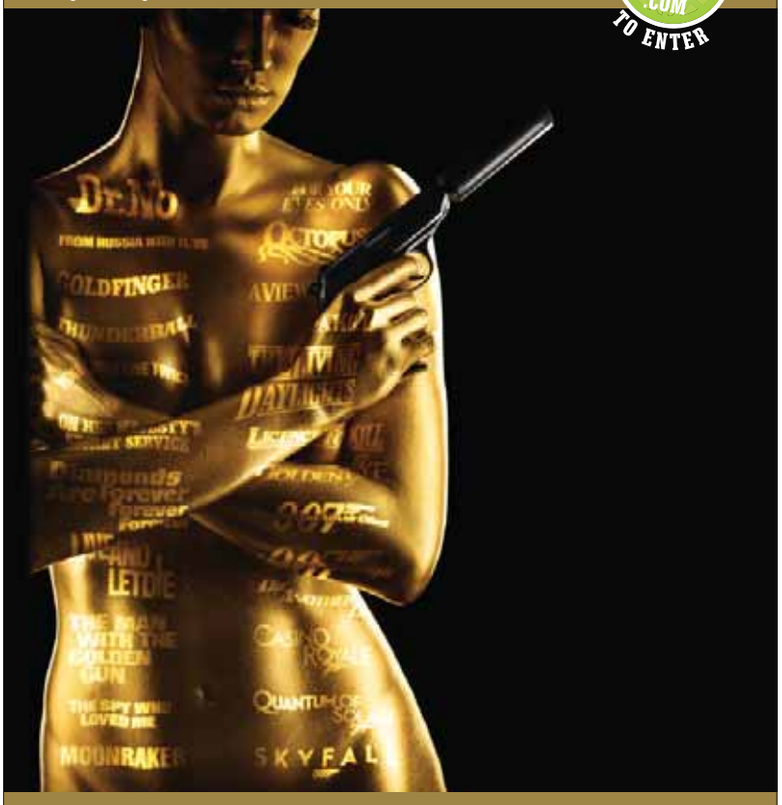

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Kathy Buckworth, kathybuckworth.com

As more airlines impose fees for checked bags, travellers are looking for ways to stuff their carry-on bags full and into overflowing overhead bins. But are you really getting something for free?

The disadvantages to checking a bag is (sometimes) the financial cost, wait times at the baggage carousel or having the bag delayed or lost.

But with a carry-on, downsides include jumping up to wait in line and get on the plane early to secure a bin, (within at least a few rows of your seat) and then hefting a huge bag over your (and others') heads or having to ask

for help to do so.

You're also limited to only 100 millilitres of any liquid (this includes alcohol). Not to mention the jammed in, wrinkled clothes, not having just the right shoes and pulling the suitcase through miles of airport.

And the time you saved? Your checked in pals used it to read an extra chapter, have another glass or visit the washroom in the airport, prior to boarding. Just make sure you consider the real cost, carefully. **KATHY BUCKWORTH IS AN AWARD WINNING WRITER. VISIT KATHYBUCKWORTH.COM OR FOLLOW KATHY ON TWITTER @KATHYBUCKWORTH**

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All Mommy wants for Christmas this year is a photo of you with Santa in which you're not crying hysterically. Follow along with the comedic (mis)adventures of mommyhood with Reasons Mommy Drinks online at metronews.ca/voices

Of wish lists, undesirable gifts and handling high expectations

Holiday demands. Christmas is a time of year when it's important to manage your kids' high hopes

MARY SHELL
Metro World News in New York

Your children may have wish lists a mile long, but Denise Schipani, author of Mean Moms Rule: Why Doing the Hard Stuff Now Creates Good Kids Later, says that when it comes to gifts, more stuff under the Christmas tree isn't necessarily more satisfying.

"The holidays can be sensory overload for adults. It can be that way for your child, too," she says.

Feeling overwhelmed at your children's overwhelming holiday demands? It's up to you to manage their expectations. They can't temper themselves in the throes of the holidays.

"My kids still believe in Santa Claus, and they make their lists," she says. But Schipani makes sure her kids understand these are wish lists and not just a rundown of what they'll get. Choosing one thing from the list allows you to surprise your child, she says. "There's a way for them to feel excited about getting stuff without getting greedy about it."

You won't be a Grinch if your child doesn't get everything they desire — not everybody gets everything they want.

"And when your kids ask for something that's too extravagant, Schipani points to a chapter in her book titled: Say 'No.' Smile. Don't Apologize. Repeat as Necessary.

"It's not damaging to say, 'No,'" she reminds.

On the big day, tune in to your kid's experience and how he or she is reacting to unwrapping the gifts. If there's a tantrum or you see your child's eyes glaze over, take note.

"The reason they're doing that might well be that you've overwhelmed them," she says.

And it's equally important to notice when you see your child stop and really engage with a toy. It means you've given your child something he or she really enjoys — a gift that's probably sufficient on its own.

Finally, remember to set a good example for your kids and take opportunities throughout the year to remind them of the great things they already have.

Avoid cultivating a "more is better" attitude, she notes. "Model the behaviour that you want to see."

Your relatives

When you can't control the grandparents...

- **Meaningful gifts.** "There are relatives that are not going to listen, no matter what," Schipani says. But try having a conversation with family members before the holidays. Tell them to consider whether gifts are age-appropriate or whether a combination of quality time and a meaningful gift might be better for your child than an iPod or Xbox."

Pay attention to your kids' reactions as they open gifts. ISTOCK

Unconventional families of the silver screen

Any Day Now star Alan Cumming picks five films featuring unconventional families. GETTY IMAGES

Any Day Now follows the struggle of a gay couple in late-1970s Los Angeles to adopt an abandoned teenage boy with down syndrome.

It's not exactly your traditional, old-fashioned family unit. So who better than the film's star, Alan Cumming, to ponder memorably unusual families in film history?

The Scottish actor plays a flamboyant female impersonator who falls in love with a closeted prosecutor (Garret Dillahunt) and tries to build a stable home for the boy, played by Isaac Leyva. It's clearly a story — and a genre — he feels passionately about. Here's Cumming discussing his five favourite films about unconventional families:

Flirting With Disaster (1996)
This is a hilarious sort of weird family road trip with Ben Stiller going on a journey to find his birth parents and meeting a lot of insane people along the way. It's one of David O Russell's early films and I love it. There is a dinner scene that must be one of the most awkward meals ever on film!

Auntie Mame (1958)
Rosalind Russell is brilliant as a wealthy bohemian New York maven who suddenly has to parent her nephew. I always thought I would like to meet an Auntie Mame, because she is so whimsical and tells great stories and has adventures, but now I think I am becoming her. I find myself telling my friends' kids all sorts of weird lies and my niece once told me that what she wanted for Christmas was for me to be less crazy.

The Royal Tenenbaums (2001)
Wes Anderson directs an all-star cast about a dysfunctional family who wrote the book about dysfunctional families. It is absolutely hilarious and really scary at the same time. Again, this film stars Ben Stiller, who I think does the achingly funny/searingly awkward and painful combo better than any film actor today.

The Kids Are All Right (2010)
Julianne Moore and Annette Bening are a lesbian couple whose adopted kids seek out their birth father with very explosive consequences. It's a beautiful film, again funny and tender in equal measures.

Coneheads (1993)
They're a family with cone-shaped craniums who come to Earth. It doesn't get much more unconventional than this! THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Meatballs and Cranberry Marinara get the party started

1. Heat the oven to 425 F. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, cilantro, jalapenos, garlic, fennel, oregano, onion powder, red pepper flakes, 2 teaspoons of salt and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Whisk until well combined. Add the ground beef, then mix gently until completely blended. Divide the mixture into 50 balls, using about 2 tablespoons of the mixture per ball. Arrange the meatballs on the prepared baking sheet.

Ingredients

- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro
- 1 tbsp finely chopped jalapeno slices
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 3 lbs ground beef (93 per cent lean)
- 14-oz can whole berry cranberry sauce
- 15-oz can diced tomatoes
- Splash of hot sauce

This recipe makes 50 meatballs. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3. Place the baking sheet in the oven and bake the meatballs for 20 minutes. Increase heat to broil and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes, or until lightly browned.

4. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the cranberry sauce and diced tomatoes. Bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper, and a splash of hot sauce.

5. When meatballs are done, arrange on a platter, then spoon the cranberry mixture over them. Serve with toothpicks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Healthy eating

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What better snack to reach for than popcorn when watching those classic Christmas movies? Just watch those popcorn toppings.

Kernel's double-butter popcorn (9 cups)

1,380 calories / 42 g fat / 1,800 mg sodium
Double anything usually indicates a red flag. The butter really increases the calories and fat.

Equivalent

Nine cups of Kernel's double-butter poporn is equal in fat to 16 Rice Krispie Squares.

Kernel's butter salt popcorn (9 cups)

409 calories / 21 g fat / 352 mg sodium
The butter salt refers more to seasoning than butter amount as reflected in the calories and fat. Sodium is excellent by comparison.

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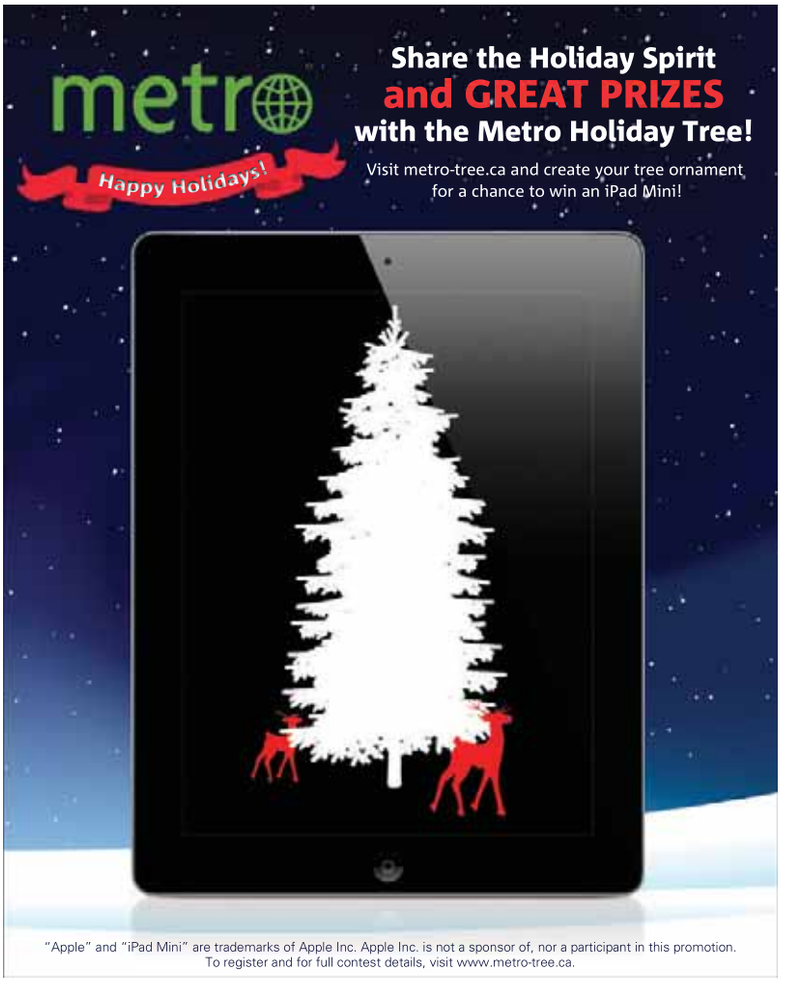
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The business of giving start-ups a big boost

Helping hand. Sarah Prevette is guiding fellow entrepreneurs toward greatness

THE IN-CREDIBILITY FACTOR
Teresa Kruze
life@metronews.ca

Sarah Prevette. PROVIDED

Name: Sarah Prevette
City: Toronto
Age: 30
Occupation: Founder and CEO of Sprouter

Sarah Prevette has been hailed as one of the top entrepreneurs in North America. With her work profiled in the Wall Street Journal and Forbes magazine, Prevette is credited with assisting more than 100,000 start-ups around the world through her online company. Sprouter was acquired by the Post Media Network in 2011, but she still runs the company and has started a new venture called BetaKit that is focused on identifying emerging technology trends for Fortune 500 companies.

Leaving a legacy

"I hope I can look back one day and say I acted on my ambitions and that I left the world a better place."

Sarah Prevette
Founder and CEO of Sprouter

I knew I was on my way when ... someone came up to me and told me how Sprouter had affected their life. It was profoundly moving to have someone give credit to something you had built as a reason for their success. The incredible feedback from the community continues to be a motivating factor for all of us.

I hope I can look back one day and say I acted on my ambitions and that I left the world a better place.

Action Plan

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Lockout

NHLPA vote to dissolve union underway

A critical vote was set to begin Sunday that will determine if the NHL labour battle moves from the negotiating table to the courtroom.

The players are casting their ballots on whether or not to give their executive board the authority to dissolve the NHL Players' Association.

Doing so would allow the board to file a disclaimer of interest, which is a step toward disbanding the union and giving the players the chance to file anti-trust lawsuits against the league.

Two-thirds of the union's membership must vote in favour of the move over a five-day period that ends Thursday, then the union executive board must respond.

The league has already taken some pre-emptive action after it filed a class-action complaint on Friday that asked a federal court in New York to make a declaration on the legality of the lockout.

The NHL also filed an unfair labour practice charge with the U.S. National Labor Relations Board.

By filing the class-action complaint in New York, the NHL guaranteed that the legality of the lockout would be decided in a court known to be sympathetic towards management.
If the NHLPA files for a "disclaimer of interest" it will seek to have the work stoppage deemed illegal — something that could see players paid triple their lost salary in damages if successful

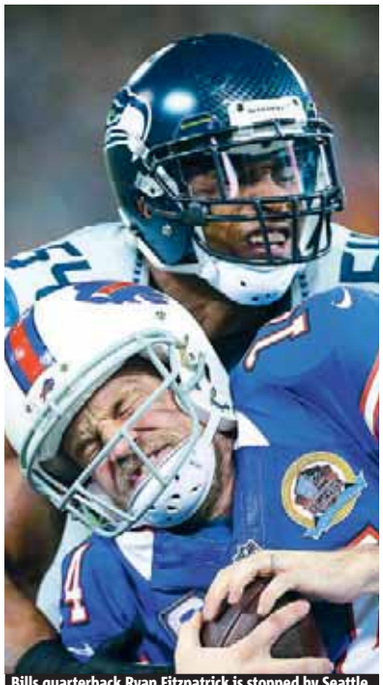
THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr GETTY IMAGES

Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson, left, beats Bills strong safety George Wilson to the corner for his third touchdown on Sunday in Toronto. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson looks to pass at Rogers Centre. RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES

Korean pop star Psy performs at Sunday's halftime show. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS



Bills quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick is stopped by Seattle Seahawks middle linebacker Bobby Wagner on Sunday at Rogers Centre. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Bills' game goes south as NFL comes north

Toronto. Seattle leaves Ontario with lopsided win, officially ending Buffalo's playoff hopes

Even star receiver Stevie Johnson's golden grill couldn't put a shine on this Buffalo performance.

The Bills were hammered 50-17 by the Seattle Seahawks at the Rogers Centre in a 'home game' — and performance — that Buffalo fans probably were only too glad happened in another country.

"The bottom line is we played poorly on offence and defence today," Buffalo coach Chan Gailey said by way of summary.

"We played bad, we played poorly and if you play poorly against a good football team, you're going to look extremely bad and we played poorly and we looked extremely bad. We did," he added.

The ugly loss Sunday, before a less-than-capacity 40,770, officially eliminated the Bills (5-9) from playoff contention for the 13th straight year.

"We stunk it up today," said running back C.J. Spiller.

"I guess if you look back at it, it's an ugly loss of course," Johnson, a diamond stud glittering in his cheek and ear, added through golden teeth.

Johnson did his bit, hauling in eight passes for 115 yards. One was a marvellous one-handed grab that quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick called "one of the best catches I have ever seen in person."

And Spiller's 103 yards rushing took him over 1,000 for the season.

But the Seahawks carved open the Buffalo defence in the first half, with rookie quarterback Russell Wilson bamboozling the Bills with his mobility.

Seattle's first-half possessions went like this: TD, TD, FG, TD, TD and punt. Still the Bills rallied with a late TD and field goal to cut the deficit to 31-17 at the half.

"If you guys were in here at halftime, the energy was there, everybody was excited," said Spiller. "We really thought that if we got the ball (in) the second half, go down and score real quick, we could turn the game around. And it just didn't happen and that's the part that hurts the most."

Buffalo had won the toss and chosen to defer. So Seattle kicked the ball away to open the second half.

But all that good work at the end of the first half went to naught as Buffalo opened the second half with a interception, fumble and interception. Seattle suddenly led 47-17 less than nine minutes into the third quarter.

"We came out and I had the interception and kind (of) lost all momentum that we had and went downhill from there fast," said a frustrated Fitzpatrick, who completed 21 of 38 passes for 217 yards, one TD and two interceptions.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

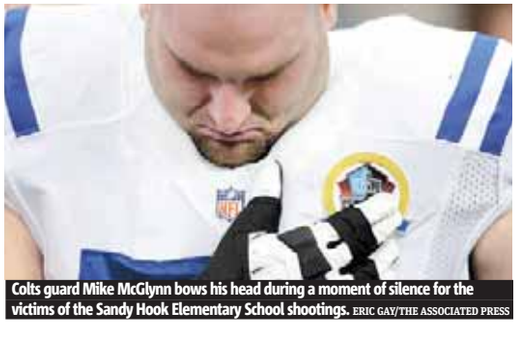
Bills in Toronto

50	17
Seahawks	Bills

By the numbers

+50

Sunday's win marked the second straight lopsided win for the Seahawks, who downed Arizona 58-0 last week.



Colts guard Mike McGlynn bows his head during a moment of silence for the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. ERIC GAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL. Moments of silence observed around league for shooting victims

The New England Patriots silenced their "End Zone Militia" on Sunday night, paying tribute to the victims of the Connecticut school shooting by cancelling the traditional scoring celebration in which men dressed as Revolutionary War soldiers fire muskets into the air.

Two days after 20 children and six adults were shot to death at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., the Patriots joined teams across the NFL that honoured the victims' memory by asking for a moment of silence.

New York Giants receiver Victor Cruz, after learning that he was the favourite player of one six-year-old victim, wrote "R.I.P. Jack Pinto," "Jack Pinto, my hero" and "This one is for you" on his shoes for the Giants game against the Falcons. Cruz said he called the boy's family after hearing he was a Giants fan and was told they planned to bury him in one of Cruz's No. 80 jerseys. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Upside out the door?

The 23-year-old d'Arnaud was due to arrive in the majors in 2013. He was the 2011 Double-A Eastern League MVP, and was off to a terrific start in Triple-A this year before suffering a torn left knee ligament in June.

- D'Arnaud is considered by scouts an above-average, aggressive hitter with the potential to hit 15 to 20 home runs. He batted .333 and had a .975 on-base plus slugging percentage last season in 303 plate appearances
- Noah Syndergaard, 20, was one of the Jays' big three pitching prospects at Lansing in the Class-A Midwest League, posting a 2.60 ERA in 103 2/3 innings with 31 walks and 103 strikeouts.

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According to reports, the Blue Jays have a deal in place to acquire National League Cy Young winner R.A. Dickey from the Mets. Dickey went 20-6 in 2012 with a 2.73 ERA. ALEX TRAUTWIG/GETTY IMAGES

Cys matter: Jays working on a trade for Dickey

MLB. Toronto would likely pull out of any proposed deal if they could not work out a two-year extension with Dickey

The Blue Jays' rumoured blockbuster acquisition of NL Cy Young Award winner R.A. Dickey seems to have come down to 72 hours of direct negotiation with the player.

After two days of intense talks, the Jays and Mets, according to a Fox Sports report, have an agreement in principle including seven players. The Mets have given Jays general manager Alex Anthopoulos until Tuesday at 2 p.m. to talk to the 38-year-old Dickey, who has one year left on his contract, and work out a two-year extension through 2015.

The knuckleballer is rumoured to be going to the Jays along with his personal catcher, Josh Thole, and an unnamed prospect for catchers Travis d'Arnaud and John Buck, pitcher Noah Syndergaard and another prospect.

D'Arnaud and Syndergaard are the No. 1 and No. 3 prospects in the Jays organization, according to MLB.com.

Thole is a 26-year-old catcher with average abilities other than the fact he was behind the plate for many of Dickey's starts in his breakout campaign. The third Met coming back in the deal is expected to be from the second tier of a mediocre farm system — possibly outfielder Cesar Puello or right-hander Domingo Tapia, both 21.

The Jays would likely pull out of any proposed deal if they could not work out the extension with Dickey. At the end of the season, the Mets picked up a club option on the knuckleballer for a very reasonable $5 million US, but were looking to lock up the Nashville native for another two seasons. Foiled, they decided to explore a trade.

Talks have been hot and heavy since Friday afternoon. The Jays have already examined Dickey's medical records, but all players involved would have to pass medicals before any trade becomes official.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

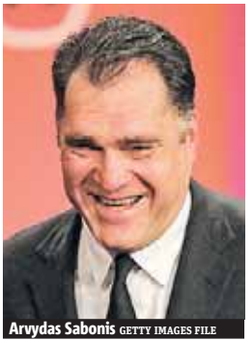
Calderon and Raptors put two wins together

NBA. Lithuanian legend takes in Raptors' win

He sat in the front row of seats, just behind and off to the right of the Raptors bench, like any other fan.

He went basically unbothered as Toronto's win over the Houston Rockets unfolded at the Air Canada Centre on Sunday afternoon, a giant of a man crammed into a tiny arena seat just enjoying some NBA basketball.

That lack of fanfare was a bit surprising, because the big man in the small seat might just be one of the top handful of players to ever grace a court.


Arvydas Sabonis GETTY IMAGES FILE

Just ask Jonas Valanciunas what Arvydas Sabonis means to him.

"Everybody loves him, he is our legend, our living legend," Valanciunas said of the Lithuanian sports icon. "It's amazing to have that kind of man from our country."

You would have to search far and wide to find one athlete in one sport who has meant so much to a game in his country as Sabonis means for basketball in Lithuania.

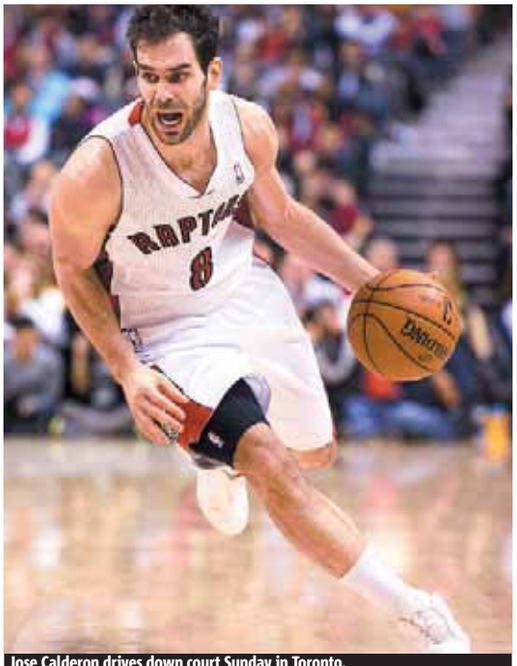
For years he was forced to play in Russia when that country occupied Lithuania up until the early-1990s, but he was a beacon for his countrymen.

When Lithuania gained its independence from Russia, it was Sabonis who led a team from a small, burgeoning country to its greatest sports moment — an overtime victory over its former occupiers in the bronze-medal game of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

It made Sabonis and his teammates symbols in a basketball-mad country and gave young players a reference point they will never forget.

"Beating Russia was something incredible," Valanciunas said. "Everybody was celebrating, everybody was so happy, high emotionally. It was the greatest moment in our country ever."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE


Jose Calderon drives down court Sunday in Toronto.
AARON VINCENT ELKAIM/THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA. Toronto wins consecutive games for first time since April

Jose Calderon was holding court with a couple dozen reporters in the post-game locker-room when Kyle Lowry walked by and said, "Good game, amigo."

Calderon had 18 points, 10 rebounds and 14 assists — his second career triple-double — to lead the short-handed Raptors to a 103-96 victory over the Houston Rockets, marking the first time Toronto has won consecutive games in eight long months.

"Let me tell you one thing about Jose: You play with him and he gives you the utmost confidence," said teammate DeMar DeRozan. "Since I've been here I've probably seen Jose upset once. He's kind of like the Tim Tebow of the team, he's just a good dude. You're with him and everything is just fine, nothing's wrong.

"I love Jose. He's a good dude."

Stepping up

- Calderon's triple-double was his second this season.
- He also held Rockets guard Jeremy Lin to just seven points and two assists.

Alan Anderson had 24 points while DeRozan added 19 points for the Raptors (6-19), who hadn't won consecutive games since April 13 (Boston) and 15 (Atlanta) of last season.

The 31-year-old Spaniard has played perennial backup for his seven-and-a-bit seasons in Toronto. He's performed admirably in that role and Sunday there was plenty of love from his teammates and the Air Canada Centre crowd of 17,863 fans.

"I'm feeling really nice," Calderon said. "With all these teammates, I know they respect me a lot. I made up my mind, I want to be the most professional player in the NBA." THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA. Lin returns to stage that launched his career

Jeremy Lin GETTY IMAGES FILE

Jeremy Lin was barely hanging on to an NBA job when he stepped on the floor at Madison Square Garden last February..

He returns Monday having proven he's a legitimate starter and sometimes a star, capable of energizing a franchise and a fan base, a player who saved his team's season and was rewarded with a lucrative contract.

Linsanity was short but spectacular, and even the New York Knicks' locker room is filled with Lin admirers.

Yet on the court, his old team hasn't missed him at all.

Birth of Linsanity

Feb. 4: Lin scores 25 points off the bench, is promoted to starter two nights later and the phenomenon known as Linsanity is born.

"What he did was amazing. I mean, I was watching every game. He was hitting game-winners, he was doing all that. He was amazing," point guard Raymond Felton said. "But it's time to move on. We're 18-5, whatever the record is, we're 10-0 at home, so no need to talk about that no more."

Lin makes his lone New York appearance with the Houston Rockets, who threw big dollars at Lin in July and were maybe surprised when the Knicks let them have him.

Instead, the Knicks traded for Felton, and signed Jason Kidd and Pablo Prigioni, and nobody can argue now. The Knicks have the best record in the Eastern Conference.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AHL

Marlies' Rynnas blanks Griffins

Jussi Rynnas made 31 saves to lead the Toronto Marlies to a 5-0 shutout victory over the visiting Grand Rapids Griffins in American Hockey League action on Sunday.

Keith Aucoin scored twice and Nazem Kadri, Nicolas Deschamps and Ryan Hamilton also tallied as the Marlies (15-9-1) won their second straight and sixth of their past seven games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Curling

Howard wins Canadian Open

World champion Glenn Howard defeated Brad Jacobs 3-1 on Sunday to win the Canadian Open of Curling in Kelowna, B.C.

The tournament is the second men's Grand Slam event of the World Curling Tour season and had a purse of $100,000.

Howard advanced to the championship with a 5-3 semifinal victory over Toronto's Mark Kean on Saturday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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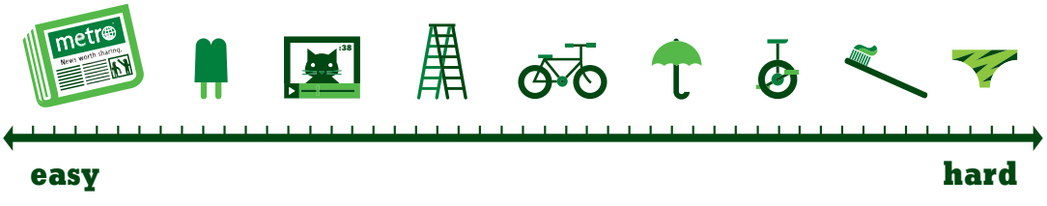

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Thinking about what might have been is a complete waste of time. You will always get the chance to do things in the future that make up for what you did, or did not do, in the past. Why worry?

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You are in a can-do mood at the moment and that's good because the planets indicate that if you make an effort, the results will be spectacular. Jupiter in the money area of your chart could make you a fortune!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Anything is possible if you want it enough — yes, anything. Identify what it is you most want to accomplish then just go for it, and ignore those who say you are being irresponsible. What do they know? Nothing!

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If there is something you wanted to finish but for one reason or another failed to see through to the end, don't worry, you'll get another chance. Is it the last chance? Maybe not, but do you want to risk it?

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You can sense that if you want to make changes to your lifestyle you are going to have to make them soon. You have spent enough time thinking and planning, now you must act. It's now or never.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Don't think about what you intend to do. Just do it and let the situation unfold according to its own momentum. The year is too old to make detailed plans. Just take each day, and moment, as it comes.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Try not to tie yourself down to tasks and chores that can be done at any time. Jupiter in your fellow Air sign of Gemini urges you to be adventurous today. Go some place you have never been to before.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
It might be wise not to get too involved in something your friends are clearly enthused about. Don't worry that you might be missing out. On the contrary, you're making time for more important things.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
It may be a bit too easy to lose your sense of perspective today as mind planet Mercury opposes Jupiter in your opposite sign. Something will annoy you for sure but you don't have to take it seriously.

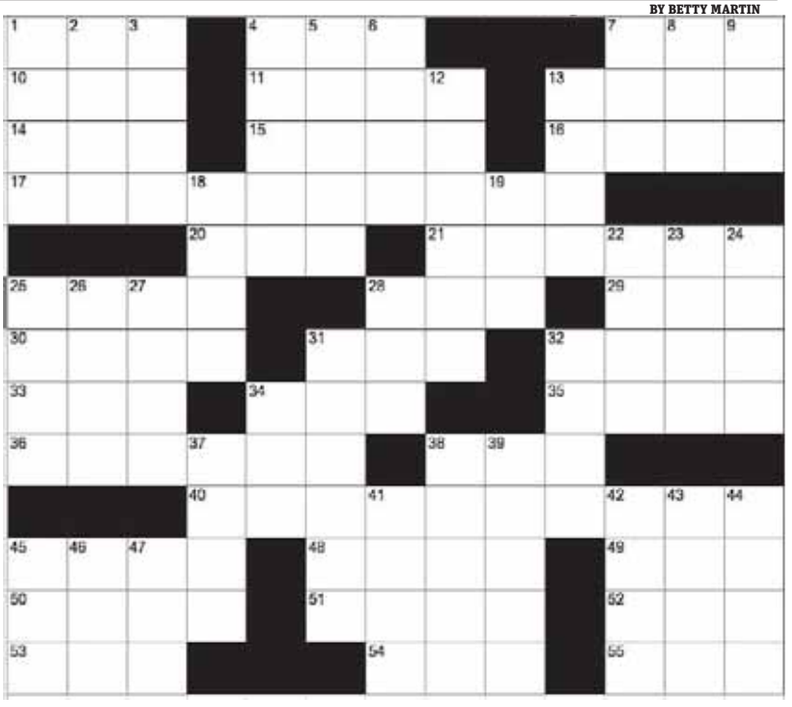
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You should be promoting yourself for all you are worth, not only because you are worth more than your rivals but because you have something valuable to offer. Leave your mark on the world and make it a big one.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You won't lack for courage or confidence today but you must make sure they are well directed. This is the perfect time to take a creative endeavour to a higher level. Believe you can do it and you'll find a way.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If you have promised to do something for a loved one then you must do it — immediately. Yes, of course, you did not realize that other factors would come into play but that's irrelevant. Promises must be kept. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

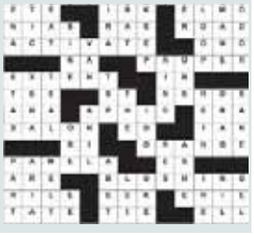
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Droop in the middle
4. Vacation spot
7. School org.
10. Airport listing
11. Fake fanfare
13. Gait
14. Follower (suffix)
15. Strong handsome horse
16. "Panic —"
17. On the up and up
20. Matter, in law
21. Aftershock
25. Take from the top
28. L.A. Law actress Susan —
29. Gardner of Hollywood
30. Zing
31. Nickname for comedian Bill
32. Shut the door forcefully
33. Founded (abbr.)
34. Touch lightly
35. Jazz great Fitzgerald
36. Front runner
38. Dutch city
40. Give a hand to
45. Group
48. Dublin's land
49. The Naked Truth actress Leoni
50. — of Green Gables
51. Squeal
52. Flub
53. To soak
54. Snake sound
55. Unruly crowd

Down
1. Leave port
2. Comic actor Johnson
3. "Little Miss Sunshine" actor Kinnear
4. Aver
5. French capital
6. Sandler or Baldwin
7. In favour of
8. — Close for Comfort
9. Banking machine (abbr.)
12. Wanes
13. "A — Grows in Brooklyn"
18. Take the creases out
19. Attempt
22. Shopping mecca
23. Racetrack shape
24. Hindu deity
25. Rod accompaniment
26. Threat ending
27. Computer input
28. Speck
31. Kind of beetle
32. Grain
34. Vigor
37. Title for Judi Dench
38. Noblemen
39. Some showdowns
41. Perjures
42. Discussion point
43. Roman Emperor
44. Clothing
45. Road surface
46. Compass bearing (abbr.)
47. Picnic pest

Friday's Crossword



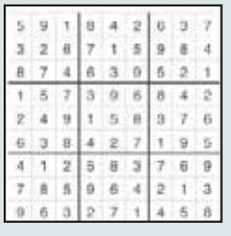
What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Friday's Sudoku



6			5	1	3			2
					2	7		
	1	2	4			6		
1	8		7		9	3		4
2								9
7		3	8		4		5	6
		5			7	9	6	
		1	2					
8			3	9	5			1

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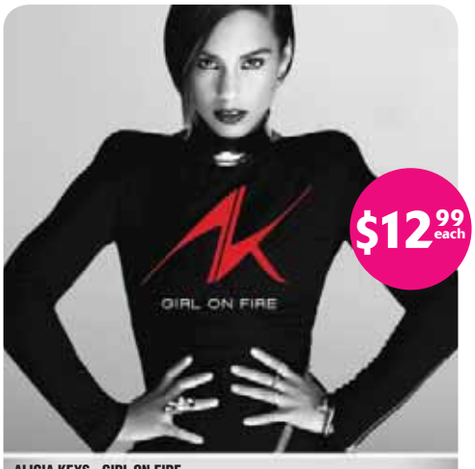

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